



# 1998

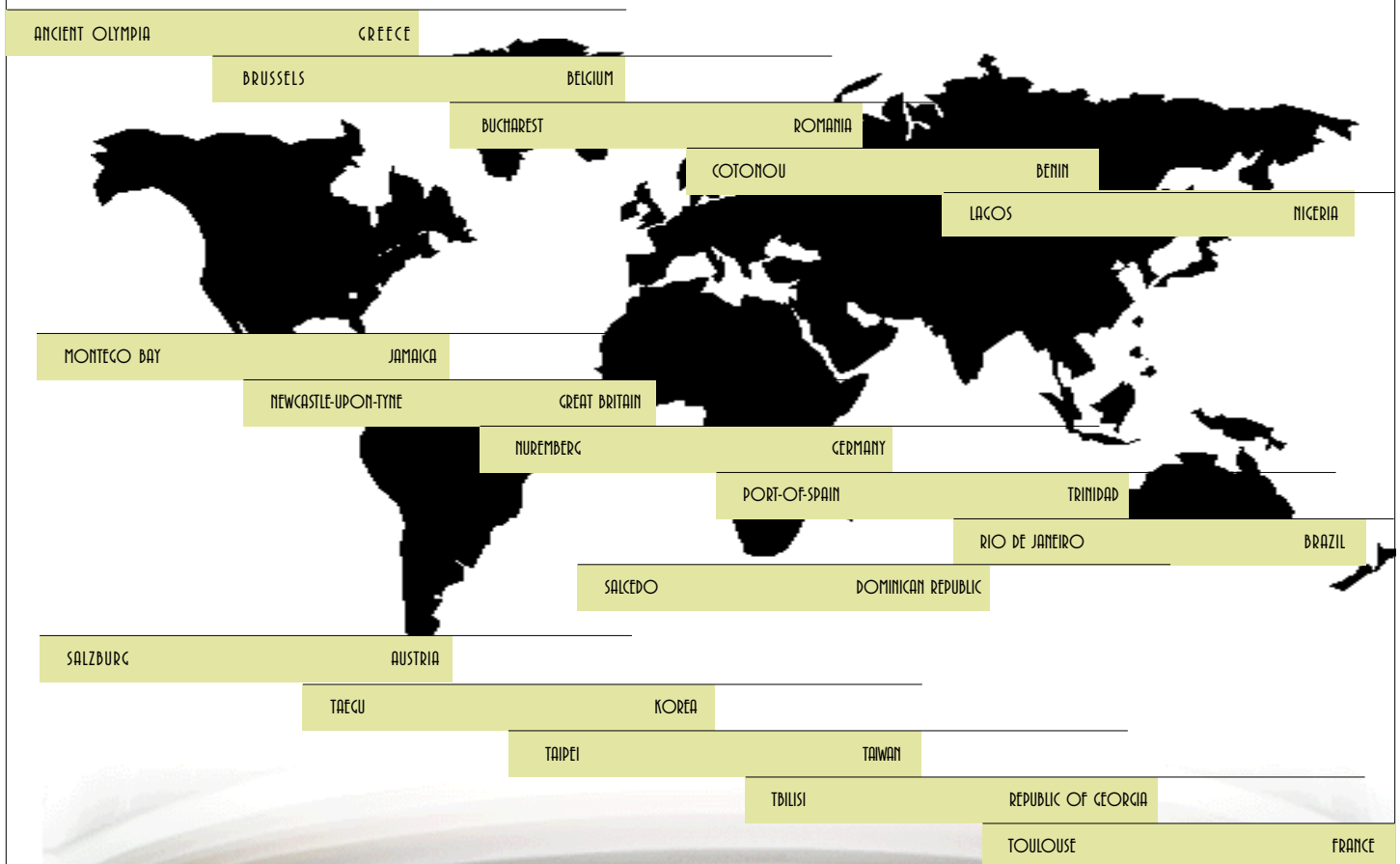
## ANNUAL REPORT



A T L A N T A • S I S T E R • C I T I E S    C O M M I S S I O N

# 1998

## ANNUAL REPORT



ATLANTA • SISTER • CITIES COMMISSION

# 1998

## ANNUAL REPORT

To

**The Honorable William Campbell**  
Mayor, City of Atlanta

**The Honorable Robb Pitts**  
President  
Atlanta City Council

FROM

**Georgianne Thomas**  
Chair  
Atlanta Sister Cities Commission



*I am pleased to submit to you the 1998 Annual Report of the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASSC).*

*In addition to the activities of the various Committees, ASSC has met monthly to carry out its role and function in relation to Atlanta's Sister City program.*

*We were pleased to serve the City of Atlanta and its international community during 1998 and look forward to the continued growth and expansion of the Sister Cities program under your administration.*

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# INTRODUCTION

## ANNUAL REPORT

### The Atlanta Sister Cities Commission

The Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASSC) was chartered by the City of Atlanta and is codified in Atlanta City Ordinance No. 1979-71. The organization is managed by a Chair who is elected by the Mayor of Atlanta. The appointee must be ratified by a majority of the Atlanta City Council. Georgianne Thomas served as Chair throughout 1998.

#### Board

The full 'board' of the Commission comprises the Chair, three Mayoral appointees and two members appointed by the City Council. In addition, the chairpersons of each Sister City Committee, or their designee, serve on the Commission.

During 1998, Dr Hershelle Challenor and Ms. Thomasene Blount Roberts were appointed to serve on the Commission. Dr. Ann Dandridge, who has been involved with the Commission since its founding, continued to serve as an Appointed Member.

Elections are held annually to select a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each elected officer serves a one-year term. Elected officials of the Commission are restricted to two consecutive terms in office. All members of the Commission are eligible to vote at these elections.

#### Committees

Standing committees of the Commission are Fund Raising, Nominating, Economic Development and Public Relations. Standing committee members are selected either from the members of the Commission or from among the membership of the committees.

#### Staff

The commission is supported by the staff of the International Affairs Division of the Mayor's Office. The staff participates in monthly or special meetings, help shape the Commission's policy and act as liaison between the Commission and the Mayor. They provide a valuable resource in creating and maintaining contact with foreign governmental counterparts. They also provide access to City Hall which would be difficult to obtain if they were not so intimately involved with the affairs of the Commission.

### Finances and Fundraising

Although the focus of fundraising has been at the Committee level, the Mayor's Office provided a major fundraising event during 1998 - see 'Highlights' on the following page. The Mayor's Office also pays the Commission's dues to Sister Cities International.

Community support for committee activities is widespread with city organizations providing financial and in-kind support. Several committees charge their members annual dues in order to support their activity program.

*In 1998, Atlanta increased its number of sister cities from 15 to 16 with the addition of Nuremberg.*

<i>Name of City</i>	<i>Date of Affiliation</i>	<i>Chair</i>
Ancient Olympia - Greece	1994	Mr. Lou Zakas
Brussels - Belgium	1983	Ms. Louise Suggs
Bucharest - Romania	1994	Mr. Nick Modares
Cotonou - Benin	1995	Mr. Nony Mbaezue
Lagos - Nigeria	1974	Dr. Augustine O. Esogbue
Montego Bay - Jamaica	1972	Mr. Vin Martin
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne - Great Britain	1977	Mr. David Smith
Nuremberg - Germany	1998	Mr. Thomas Kosse
Port-of-Spain - Trinidad	1987	Ms. Norma Hamlett
Rio de Janeiro - Brazil	1972	Dr. Arnold Heller
Salcedo - Dominican Republic	1996	Mr. Victor Ramirez
Salzburg - Austria	1967	Mr. Carlton Parker
Taegu - Korea	1981	Mr. John Lee
Taipei - Taiwan	1974	Mr. David Yu
Tbilisi - Republic of Georgia	1988	Ms. Nancy Love
Toulouse - France	1974	Roger & Franklyn Skidmore

### ***Sister Cities International Convention – 2001***

In July 1998, members of ASSC visited the Sister Cities International Convention in Miami and made a successful bid to host the event in Atlanta in July 2001. Between 1500 and 2000 delegates representing over 40 countries will visit Atlanta to discuss the global relationship network of the Sister City movement.

This event is significant in that it reflects recognition of Atlanta as an international city. This not only offers Atlanta an opportunity to broadcast a positive message to the world via the entire network of sister cities, but it also provides an important source of tourism spending during the quiet period in Atlanta's convention calendar.

Evidence has shown that the SSI convention offers a significant opportunity for the host city to profit from residue funds. Such a benefit is, however, the reward of well-managed events that are supported by their respective city councils and business organizations. To 'prime the pump' ASSC must raise over \$300,000 in cash and kind for the purposes of hosting the event. This target, and the event-planning preparations, will become the ASSC's main focal point for the next two years.

The Atlanta City Council International Committee allocated \$10,000 as 'seed money' to support fundraising for the Sister Cities International Convention.



### ***A New Sister City***

As a central role, ASSC is responsible for developing a 'Foreign Policy' by identifying potential mutually-beneficial Sister City relationships and vetting applications for new relationships. During 1998, Nuremberg, in Bavaria, Germany, was accepted as Atlanta's 16<sup>th</sup> Sister City and a delegation was sent for the official signing in December 1998. Councilor Vern McCarty represented Mayor Campbell at an event that was attended by Nuremberg's top dignitaries and press.

The Atlanta delegation also included Ms. Steronica Dunston, Office of International Affairs for the City of Atlanta; Mr. Nick Gold, Press Secretary and Spokesman for Mayor Bill Campbell; Professor Dr. Augustine O. Esogbue, Vice Chair, Atlanta Sister Cities Commission; Dr. Frank D. Larkins, Chair, Nuremberg-Atlanta Sister Cities Committee; Dr. Fenwick Huss, Director, Institute of International Business, Georgia State University; and Mr. Daniel E. Kinsey, Institute of International Business, Georgia State University.

Nuremberg was accepted as a Sister City because it had so much in common with Atlanta. The city, like Atlanta, "arose from the ashes of war" as a modern and historic city. Both cities are located in the southern part of their respective countries; both are major transportation and communication centers; and both had some major past civil right issues to address. The application of Nuremberg was very meticulously prepared and zealously pursued. It showed evidence of both governmental, business and civilian support as well as a significant presence of Germans in the greater Atlanta area and a high participation potential.

*Photograph opposite shows the display and presentation of the proclamation from the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission.*

*L - R: Council Member Vern McCarty; Prof. Dr. Augustine O. Esogbue - Atlanta Sister Cities Commission; Lord Mayor of Nuremberg, Ludwig Scholz.*

# HIGHLIGHTS

## ANNUAL REPORT

### Commission Fund Raising

On March 31st, 1998, a major fundraising event was held at City Hall with approximately 500 people attending. The event was sponsored by the Office of the Mayor and local corporate benevolence from Coca Cola, Delta Air Lines, Genuine Parts, UPS and VISA. Door prizes and in-kind support were also received from Air Jamaica, British Airways, Trans Atlantic Imports and United Distributors.

The event took the form of a dinner with multi-cultural entertainment, held in the City Hall Atrium. Over \$7,000 was raised to support Atlanta Sister City Commission and an additional \$5,000 for member committees.



Members of the Lagos-Atlanta Sister City Committee line up at the Sister City fundraising event.

### Web Site - [www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm](http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm)

Atlanta Sister City Commission developed a Web Site, hosted by the City of Atlanta at [www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm](http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm). The Commission publishes its press releases at the site and member committees have posted information on their activities and sister cities.



### ***The role of Atlanta's Sister City Movement within the local community***

ASSC's bylaws state that its purpose is dedicated to letting people give expression to their common desire for friendship, promoting understanding and developing mutually beneficial relationships. Members of the Commission were asked to comment on the role that their committee played in the Atlanta community. Reports indicated that the committees saw their role as fostering educational, cultural, civic and business exchanges.

Within the context of Atlanta, committees faced unique local conditions. The following quotations provide an interesting insight into the differing roles played:

*"The Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City Committee is an organization that helps hold members of the Romanian Community together. It is about networking, educational, cultural business and economic development. We have been working hard to overcome Romania's image as a former communist nation and inform Atlantans and Americans in general that Romania and Bucharest are safe, stable and attractive locations for Americans to travel and conduct business."*

*"The Atlanta-Rio Committee is a link for Brazilians with their former country. It is a symbol of cultural and emotional unity among Brazilian – Atlantans, and the Committee networks for educational, cultural, cultural and philanthropic endeavors."*

By contrast to the above, a number of committees, such as Toulouse and Newcastle report that there are large French and British communities in Greater Atlanta and a number of organizations that provide a variety of activities for their ethnic and business communities.

*"The Atlanta - Toulouse Sister City Committee works as a dual network between the citizens of both cities. There are three types of members of the committee – local resident members originally from a variety of regions of France, Atlanta residents who love France in general, and those who have a specific bond with the city of Toulouse. All work within the framework of Atlanta - Toulouse as it provides a focal point for their interests. The same is true from the French side. It is not just*

*the City of Toulouse that has an interest in Atlanta. It is also the Midi-Pyrénées (the region to which Toulouse belongs) and the southern part of France in general. All of these individuals and governmental bodies wish for a stronger tie between the two cities."*

Toulouse and Newcastle also express the concept of the Committee operating within a cellular network in each community:

*"Rather than focus on a single connection – such as a business relationship, Atlanta -Toulouse has taken the approach of being a contact point between the two cities (regions) and letting special interest groups develop further contacts under the umbrella of other organizations. The Atlanta -Toulouse connection is educational, medical, and cultural in nature, always with the orientation of personal development."*

*"The British community in Atlanta enjoys a similar cultural environment to their own and has no real requirement of the Sister City Committee as an ethnic focal point, except for the recent occasions when Newcastle has lost the Soccer Cup Final! What we do find, is that we act as a 'matchmaker' for groups from each community, helping them to find their natural partner in the other. Rather than initiating and coordinating all activities, we assist the partners to communicate and provide resources, contacts and information to enable the partnership to develop. We refer to the Atlanta-Newcastle Network, not as a single point of contact but as multiple points of contact between the two cities, each independent of one another yet unified by a focus on using a common link to pursue their special interest."*

Another point of interest is the integration of the Sister City Committee activity into the Consular System and Chamber of Commerce Chapters representing each respective. All committees are involved with both types of organization. Reflecting that Brussels is Belgium's capital city, the Atlanta – Brussels program, for example, is virtually synonymous with the cultural and business program of the Belgian Consulate and Chamber of Commerce.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

## ANNUAL REPORT

The Lagos-Atlanta Committee played a significant role during Nigeria's military dictatorship as the glue that bound together the various ethnic and socio-political groups of the Nigerian Atlantan community. As one of the most heterogeneous of all the Nigerian organizations and it included professionals from a variety of disciplines. It became the banner under which most groups could rally together when a major Nigerian or African dignitary visited Atlanta and a vial for disseminating information about the political and social progress of the country. When the South Eastern U.S. Summit on Africa was being planned, it played a major role to ensure that African professionals and leaders were involved in the process. The Atlanta Town Hall Meeting on Africa was chaired by one of its members and former City Councilwoman, Ms. Sheila Martin Brown, and its Chair, as well as other members of the committee chaired several sub committees. It provided vital inputs into the special session on Nigeria that took place at the SE Summit. Two of its members were elected as delegates to the National Summit on Africa which will take place in Washington D.C. in February of 2000.

During the transitioning from military to civilian government, two of its members, were invited to meet with the President, General Abdisalami, Alani Ogunlade and his cultural dance troupe were flown to Andrews Air Force Base to welcome and entertain the President in the first visit of any Nigerian President in over ten years.

The Chair of the Lagos Committee was involved with writing the proposal and the lobbying efforts that led to the setting up of the Office of the Consulate General of Nigeria in Atlanta. This is remarkably the only career and diplomatic Consulate of any African country in the Atlanta and Georgia. More lobbying was done, again behind the scenes, leading to the final re-opening of the Consulate in December, 1998 after a nearly 15 year hiatus. The new Consulate General, Hon. K. O. Olisemeka made it a point of duty to attend the December meeting of the Lagos Committee, using it as a forum to unfold his government's policy and mission statement as well as providing a pledge to consult with the leaders of the Lagos Committee in his dealings with the Atlanta Nigerian community. Both Dr. Esogbue, the Lagos Chair and Mr. Alani again were important players in the setting up of the newly formed American Nigerian International Chamber of Commerce, the first of its type in the U.S.



*Councillor Jim Maddox addresses the Atlanta Nigerian Community.*



*Atlanta Sister Cities Commission participating in local events.*

# 1998 HELPING OUR FRIENDS

## ANNUAL REPORT

Atlanta showed its care for its sister city friends when a team of 50 medical professionals, including nurses and doctors flew from Atlanta to Jamaica to participate in the Atlanta-Montego Bay Sister City Committee **Fifth Annual Health Fair**. They were joined by another 45 local practitioners and provided free health care to 1,850 patients. The team of specialists in pediatrics, podiatry, gynecology, internal medicine and other medical areas brought 140 boxes of donated medical supplies with them. Medical services and supplies were valued at over seven million dollars.

The City of Salcedo experienced the after effects of **Hurricane Georges** in September 1998. The Atlanta-Salcedo Sister City Committee and other Georgia organizations quickly organized and sent money, clothing, food and medicine. The Mayor and Governor of Salcedo visited Atlanta in October to thank the city for its support.

In response to a **winter crisis**, The Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City organized supplies for citizens of Bucharest, Romania. The Sister City Committee is actively supporting a movement to assist orphans in Romania, led by Atlanta evangelist, Bob Gass, who visited Romania and Moldova during 1998.

In September of 1998, a contingent of athletes from Trinidad and Tobago, who participated in the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Olympic Games in Malaysia became stranded at Hartsfield International Airport because of **Hurricane Georges**. The Atlanta-Port-of Spain Committee, with the assistance from the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, the Public Relations Officer of Hartsfield International Airport, the Trinidad and Tobago Society of Georgia, the Director of Pan Soca Transportation and the Director and Staff of Limo on the Go and Professor Bernice deGannes Scott of Spelman College, provided the athletes with food and shelter until they were able to return to Trinidad and Tobago.

In seeking to gather information on the electoral process in the United States, the elected officials of the **Benin Parliament** came to Atlanta in July 1998, under the auspices of the US Information Agency, where they were received by the Atlanta-Cotonou Committee. They were given a welcome reception at the Mayor's Office and another one at their hotel. At the time of their visit, they committed to help form a Sister City Committee in Cotonou.

# EDUCATION

## ANNUAL REPORT

Students and educational institutions are among the prime beneficiaries of the sister city programs.

During February, the Port of Spain-Atlanta Sister City Committee hosted students of North Atlanta High School, who visited Trinidad to set up the **International Business Program** (see below). Dr Heller of North Atlanta High School and members of the Executive of the Atlanta - Port of Spain Sister City Committee, accompanied them.

In April 1998, Montego Bay, Jamaica, hosted the **Second Annual Super Exchange**. Students from North Atlanta High School participated along with school delegations from Salcedo and Port-of-Spain.

North Atlanta High School successfully hosted the **Trans Caribbean Exchange** in Atlanta in November with participation including students of Montego Bay and Port-of-Spain, which sent a delegation led by its Mayor and the Minister of Tourism for Tobago. This activity forms part of the award-winning International Business Program, coordinated by North Atlanta High School, which has established a worldwide network of schools and colleges that share learning in business management. Other sister city participants include Rio-de-Janeiro and Newcastle.



*Super Exchange students*



*Trans-Caribbean Exchange students*

The University of Northumbria in Newcastle was appointed as official coordinator of the State of Georgia's '**Centers Abroad**' program for Europe. A Memorandum of Understanding cleared the way to augment a program of exchanges between students, academic and administrative staff. Shared research programs and other joint developments were set as goals for the following years.

The Atlanta-Toulouse Committee has an **Annual Exchange** for both the high school and graduate school levels. Each year a number of students from a mixture of Atlanta high schools and from Georgia State University travel to Toulouse for separate extended summer stays. Each year a group of high school students is received back from Toulouse. The main difference between the high school students in the two groups is the number of those taking advantage of the program. The students in France value the experience of staying in an American home and see it as having value in their later life.

The Atlanta high school students going to Toulouse are almost totally from the public school system. Many private schools in Atlanta have programs of their own, which in the eyes of the students, their parents and the teachers make the Atlanta - Toulouse Sister Cities program unnecessary for their students. The main difference, which does not seem to be valued at the private schools, is that the students that exchange under the auspices of the Atlanta-Toulouse Sister City Committee stay in

the homes of host families and actually live with them on a one-to-one basis. The private school programs are, basically, travel programs, which take the students to historic and cultural sights (a valuable activity in its own right). There the students speak with the tour guide and shopkeepers, without any interaction between their peers in English, and certainly not with anyone in French.

*"In a way this makes the Atlanta - Toulouse High School exchange an elitist activity for the non-elite. Given that there is room for both approaches, the only question is, which develops the students to their greatest capacity?"* Quote from Atlanta-Toulouse report.

Besides connecting the host families and visiting students, the Atlanta - Toulouse committee makes arrangements for visits by the students and their host families to various local activities – ballgames, musical events, the Martin Luther King Center, laser shows and other group oriented activities.

Each year the graduate students from **Georgia State University** attend a wine and cheese tasting party prior to traveling to Toulouse. In fact this is an orientation course where the graduate students are provided with information on what to expect and how to act – but in a pleasant, non-confrontational atmosphere.

There is also an exchange between the administrators of the hospitals in Toulouse and the faculty of **Emory University** that occurs from time to time.

In August and September, Ms. Angela Tesileanu, who is the principal and teacher of Social Sciences in **Nichita Stanesco Vocational School, Bucharest**, visited Atlanta and several other U.S. cities to learn about the educational system in the United States. Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City Committee worked in cooperation with United States Information Agency, Georgia Council for International Visitors and other organizations to accommodate visits or appointments with Georgia Department of Education, the Education Department at Georgia State University, the Council on Occupational Education, a vocational facility, a high school, and the City of Atlanta Public Schools Board. The Committee continues to be in contact with her in Bucharest to exchange further information and to set up student and faculty exchanges.

The Atlanta – Cotonou Committee has established a **Scholarship Program** and is working on obtaining collaboration with a university to assist in these endeavors. The Scholarship Committee is attempting to locate Benin Citizens living in Atlanta to enroll them as members of the committee. It is hoped that this will encourage and assist the committee's work in the exchange program as well as in the establishment of a vital committee in Cotonou.

The Atlanta-Cotonou Committee matched approximately 110 Atlanta students with high school students in Cotonou, Benin in a **Pen Pal Exchange** program. Due, however, to a lull in the exchange of letters, the committee President met with the Benin Embassy in order to engage its assistance in mitigating the costs via the 'diplomatic pouch'. Unfortunately, the Embassy has been unable to accomplish this.

In June, the Atlanta – Salcedo Sister City Committee received Rafael Toribio, President of INTEC University. **INTEC University** is one of the three most prominent universities in the Dominican Republic. Jeffrey Lizardo, INTEC's Director of Alumni Affairs accompanied President Toribio. On this trip President Toribio and Mr. Lizardo met with officials from GA-Tech and Emory Universities to discuss an educational partnership.

In October, Governor Rodríguez and Mayor Corniel of Salcedo visited North Atlanta High School, during a visit to Atlanta, and spoke with students who were scheduled to participate in the **Sister Cities Educational Exchange**.



# 1998 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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Cultural activities were prominent on the sister cities 1998 calendar.

In February, the Atlanta-Toulouse Sister City Committee hosted a performance of the **Ballet Capitole de Toulouse** at the Fox Theater. The ballet performed in only three cities – New York, Atlanta and Charlotte. Working with the office of the Consul General of France, the Atlanta -Toulouse Committee ensured that the event was well attended and that a reception after the performance gave the dancers the proper recognition.



*Ballet Capitole de Toulouse*

Also in February, the Atlanta-Salcedo Sister City Committee held a celebration of the **Dominican Republic Independence Day** at the Atlanta City Hall Atrium. In honor of this historical event a quartet played the National Dominican Anthem. The Committee Chairman spoke about the relationship between Atlanta and Salcedo in regards to Martin Luther King and the Mirabal Sisters. The visitors to the event and employees of City Hall were treated to a tasting of Dominican coffee.

Another February program involved students from North Atlanta High School and their chaperons who were able to experience a preview of Trinidad and Tobago Carnival, when they visited steel band yards, calypso tents, panorama in the "Big Yard" and the children's carnival.



*Carnival*

Mr. William Ransom, subcommittee Chair for Culture, also visited Trinidad and Tobago in February to videotape and take photographs of the Carnival celebrations. These have been shared with a large cross-section of Atlanta community including 500 participants involved in the African Diaspora World Course, participants in the Seminar on the Images of Women in Media and students at Spelman College.

Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City Committee supports the efforts of the **Romanian-American Cultural Foundation**, which is a local Metro Atlanta cultural center headed by a native of Romania. There have been many Romanian musicians visiting Atlanta and performing at various functions. The Romanian Folk Musicians performance at the March 31st Atlanta Sister City Fund-Raiser banquet, celebrating cultural diversity, was well received.

In April, the Atlanta-Ancient City of Olympia Sister City Committee dedicated their gift of a statue in Olympia, Greece. This was in reciprocation for the 'Tribute' statue that was placed in Atlanta's Centennial Park during the Olympics by the Ancient City of Olympia and AHEPA – a Greek organization founded in Atlanta in 1922.

# 1998 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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In May, The Atlanta-Port of Spain Committee together with the Atlanta Black Pages, cosponsored Ms. Jaliyla Scipio, a Trinidadian student, to represent Trinidad and Tobago at the **First Annual Caribbean Pageant** to crown the 1998 Miss Atlanta Peach Carnival Queen. The purpose of the Pageant is to select a vibrant young lady to represent the organization in the promotion of the Caribbean culture throughout Metropolitan Atlanta and act as an ambassador and spokesperson at cultural and educational events.

Although Jaliyla did not emerge as winner of the contest, she has proven herself to be a true ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago.

Rio de Janeiro Sister City Committee co-hosted the performance of the **Angola Capoeira Dance Masters** Seminar during the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta in July.

During the last week of November, the Salcedo Committee organized its annual trip to the city of Salcedo for the commemoration of the deaths of the three **Mirabal Sisters**, heroines of the Dominican Republic.



*Mirabal Sisters Monument - Salcedo*

Among an extensive calendar of events, the Atlanta-Brussels Sister City Committee participated in the Reception to celebrate the **National Day of Belgium** on July 21<sup>st</sup>, at the Cherokee Town Club, attended by members of the Consular Corps and the Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Tourism, Randy Cordoza. In September, a **Taste of Belgium** took place and in November, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Atlanta's Abbey Restaurant recognized award-winning **Belgian Chef, Phillippe Haddad**.

The Atlanta-Cotonou Sister City Committee sent a proposal to the **Benin Minister of Culture & Tourism** to bring the musical show of Sinbad to Benin as a way of boosting cultural support and exchange.



*A visit to France with members of the Atlanta-Toulouse Committee.*

# 1998 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ANNUAL REPORT

1998 was a milestone in the development of economic ties between Atlanta and the region of Newcastle, England. Since 1996, there has been a steady build up of interest in economic development activity, led by academic and regional development organizations in Newcastle. During 1998, the Northern Development Company, the regional development organization for North East England, working in conjunction with the University of Northumbria in Newcastle, made a number of visits to Atlanta to explore methods for facilitating economic goals. A number of approaches were considered and preliminary studies were conducted. The year culminated with the establishment of a **North of England Office** in Atlanta, representing the entire northern region of England. This office combines the interests of three regional economic development agencies in expanding economic interests with Atlanta and the South Eastern region of the USA. The post is occupied by an Atlanta native who had worked at one of the regional development agencies in England.

The first activity organized to promote the link was a seminar in Atlanta on 'Managing Risk in Overseas Investment'.

Another sister city actively engaged in economic development is Taipei (Taiwan) which established the **Taipei Economic and Cultural Office** in Atlanta in 1995. The **City of Salzburg** has, for several years, had a representative based in Atlanta whose responsibility is to attract and encourage business development with companies in the USA. An active program includes the mounting of economic development delegations by US company representatives to Salzburg and reciprocal visits.

The Atlanta-Bucharest Committee has welcomed and received many fax and phone inquiries regarding business opportunities in Romania, and especially in Bucharest, from businesses located in Atlanta. **Zep Chemical Products and Renova Technology Inc.** are two examples of Atlanta companies that will have joint venture investments in Bucharest. There have been others who have successfully engaged in importing Romanian glass, crystal and ceramic products. Several major companies from Atlanta show continued success in Romania, including **Coca-Cola, Bellsouth, United Parcel Service, and Law**



**Engineering.** The committee works closely with the U.S. Embassy in Romania and Commerce Department regarding economic development.

Business and governmental groups come to Atlanta from the **South of France** (including Toulouse) two or three times each year. They contact the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Atlanta-Toulouse Sister City Committee, the Alliance Française or the office of the French Consul General. Each of these organizations contacts its appropriate counterpart and, together, work as a unified force to satisfy the need of the visiting organization and the City of Atlanta.

In July 1998, Atlanta-Port-of-Spain Sister City Committee hosted a international reception at which linkages were made between members of the community of Atlanta and that of **Trinidad and Tobago**. Preliminary discussions and consultations were made relative to trade investments, cultural exchanges and the rendition of health care services that could occur between both cities.

In October, the Mayor of Port of Spain, together with Executives of the Port of Spain-Atlanta Sister City Committee met with the Director of Marketing at Hartsfield International Airport, to discuss the possibility of **British West Indies Airways**, the national air carrier of Trinidad and Tobago, landing in Atlanta.

Port-of-Spain government officials, business people and sister city executive members held meetings with Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Atlanta Manufacturers Association, Atlanta Visitor's and Convention Bureau and other businesses in order to create the opportunity for more meaningful trade missions between both countries.

In December, a program titled "**Living/Working in Trinidad and Tobago**" took place, sponsored by the Berlitz Language Center and Atlanta for Southern Energy Company.

Interest in a trade mission and the exploration of business opportunities was expressed by a delegation of **politicians from Benin** visiting Atlanta, in July 1998, at a reception in the Mayor's office.

# 1998 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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The Atlanta-Cotonou Sister City Committee entered into a collaborative agreement with the non-profit **Echoppé Program in Benin**, operated by American citizens. The organization is engaged in supplying small business loans of \$40 each to artisans and traders in Benin. The committee approved \$400 to go toward 10 participants in this program. A meeting was held in Washington with the Ambassador of Benin to facilitate a due diligence effort.

The Atlanta-Brussels Committee participated in the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of direct flights between Atlanta and Brussels and the inauguration of a second daily flight by **Sabena Belgian World Airways**, which generated extensive media coverage. The committee is active within the **Belgian American Chamber of Commerce**, which organizes a number of networking receptions and including a business luncheon titled. 'The role of NATO in US Strategy after the Cold War', in November 1988, attended by members of the Belgian, French, German, Netherlands and Swiss-American Chambers of Commerce and Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.



*The U.S. Ambassador to Romania visits City Hall, Atlanta. See story, page 14. L - R: Marius Chilom, CEO Renova Technology; John Lazu, President - Romanian American Association of Georgia; James C. Rosapepe, U.S. Ambassador to Romania; Nick Modares, Chair - Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City Committee; Crinin Baila, V.P. - Law Engineering.*

*'Our vision is to see our regions connected culturally and educationally, both of which feed economic relationships. A number of studies in the success and failure of international business enterprise demonstrate that cultural understanding and communication is vital. A surprising number of failures by American executives working in England/Britain support the idea that cultural understanding cannot be taken for granted. With shared cultural and educational experiences, people and businesses can move between our Sister Cities and thrive within a supportive environment of mutual understanding.'* Quote from the Newcastle Report.

# 1998 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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To strengthen the relationship between Atlanta and Salcedo, the Atlanta-Salcedo Sister City Committee invited and proudly received **Salcedo's Governor José Rodríguez and Mayor Ramón Corniel**. This great event was the first meeting between Salcedo's government officials and the City of Atlanta. They were received by Mayor Bill Campbell who was invited to visit the Dominican Republic. They were also received by Council President Robb Pitts, The Jimmy Carter Center, The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, The Weather Channel, and The Martin Luther King Center.

As is done most every year, there was a **delegation of adult Atlantans** who traveled to Toulouse. They were received by Mayor Baudis in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hotel de Ville, Le Capitol. Mayor Baudis personally escorted the group on a tour of this magnificent former palace showing not only the Senate Chamber, but many other rooms usually closed to the public. The group was then received by host families for five days and afterwards traveled throughout the Bordeaux and Dordogne regions.

The Atlanta-Bucharest Sister City relationship recieved a boost from the visit to Atlanta on June 12th of James Rosapepe, the **U.S. Ambassador to Romania**. The Ambassador was received by the Romanian-American community at a luncheon meeting, held at the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel ballroom. Visits to the Carter Presidential Center, Martin Luther King Jr. Center and the Atlanta City Hall were on his schedule. At the Atlanta City Hall, Councilor Dr. Julia Emmons, presented the Ambassador with a gift on behalf of Atlanta City Council, Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, and the City of Atlanta.

**Romanian President. Dr. Emil Constantinescu** visited the United States during the summer to meet with **President Bill Clinton and Congress**, as well as with Romanian Americans, business leaders and others intrested in Romania. Atlanta Bucharest Sister City has close relationship with Romanian Ambassador, Mr. Mircea Geoana, and his staff in Washington. Therefore, at events like this, the Romanian Community in Atlanta is mobilized and works with the Embassy to promote our causes and trade and investment opportunities for American companies in Romania.

In February Ms. Paula Robinson, a member of the executive of Atlanta-Port of Spain Committee and Council Service Adminis-

trator of North West Georgia **Girls Scouts Association** interviewed Girl Scouts in Trinidad, for the purpose of summer employment at resident camps of the Girl Scouts Council of North West Georgia.



In June, Atlanta Fire Chief Minor was hosted by the Port of Spain Sister City Committee when he visited Port of Spain to promote and foster the mutual growth and development of the two firefighting departments. This visit culminated in the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fire Departments of Atlanta and Port of Spain, in October, which was facilitated by the Atlanta - Port of Spain Sister City Committee.

In October, a reciprocal visit was made by members of the Executive of the Port of Spain-Atlanta Sister City Committee, the Mayor of Port of Spain, Government Officials, the Fire Chief and his Training Officer, businessmen, teachers and students of St. Mary's, Holy Faith, Holy Name Convent and Bishop Anstey High School to Atlanta. They were hosted at receptions given by the Mayor of Atlanta, the Trinidad & Tobago Society of Georgia, the Atlanta Caribbean Association, A Taste of India, the Village Hut of Jamaica, the Fire Services Department of Atlanta, and Georgia Power/Southern Energy. They also attended the Inauguration Ceremony of the President of Spelman College.



*Georgiane Thomas meets with British Consul General, Peter Marshall (left) and members of the Atlanta-Newcastle Sister City Committee.*

# 1998

## ANNUAL REPORT



*Members of the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission*



**Produced by the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission**  
*Public Relations Committee*

*For information on Atlanta Sister Cities, contact  
Mayor's Office of International Affairs  
55 Trinity Street  
Atlanta GA 30335*

**[www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm](http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/sister/cities.htm)**

